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3) Hirano: Gov't may seek legal resolution of Futenma issue

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
January 27, 2010

The government may seek a legal resolution of the pending issue of relocating Futenma airfield, a U.S. military facility located in Okinawa Prefecture, to the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago, should the government fail to reach an agreement with the city, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano said in a press conference yesterday evening. Hirano had indicated that the government would not necessarily have to obtain local consent in the process of

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deciding on where to relocate Futenma airfield. "I wonder if the government is not allowed to proceed with this matter if we cannot obtain their consent," Hirano said in an earlier press conference. This remark is likely to incur strong reactions from Okinawa.

In yesterday evening's press conference, Hirano took the position that the government will make a decision while seeking to obtain local understanding to the extent possible. However, he went on: "I wonder if things will not move forward in the absence of (local) consent. We'd like to carefully consider this matter, but there are also cases in which it could be done legally."

Hirano also explained: "I think there are various scenarios for obtaining local consent. There are even cases in which the government is not bound to local consent." He added: "I wonder if would be acceptable to have 50 PERCENT understanding or if 70 PERCENT would be acceptable. That's a very difficult question. There are cases for which we're legally required to obtain local consent and those for which we're not."

The government is expected to face difficulties in its coordination with local authorities over a new facility site for the Futenma base's relocation. Hirano is already anticipating such difficult coordination, so he is apparently giving consideration to land expropriation or such options as using a special measures law.

The existing relocation plan involves constructing a new facility in the Henoko area of Nago, as an alternative for Futenma airfield. The planned facility requires land to be reclaimed from the sea. For this landfill, however, the government is legally required to ask for the Okinawa governor's permission. If the current plan is floated again, the government may prioritize the Okinawa governor's judgment over the Nago mayor, who is opposed to the Futenma relocation to Henoko, sources said.

4) Okinawa lawmakers to protest Futenma relocation

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
January 27, 2010

Shokichi Kina, a ruling Democratic Party of Japan lawmaker seated in the House of Representatives, and his "Uru no kai" group of Diet members elected from Okinawa Prefecture met yesterday in the Diet and decided to file a protest with the government over the issue of relocating the U.S. military's Futenma airfield facility in their island prefecture. In this regard, Prime Minister Hatoyama and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano have indicated that the government will retain the current plan to move Futenma airfield from its current location to the prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago as an option for consideration. Hirano has said there is no need to take into consideration the outcome of the city's recent mayoral election that ended in the victory of a candidate opposing the planned relocation of Futenma airfield to the city's Henoko area. The group will file a protest with Hirano shortly.

5) Campbell: U.S. will keep eye on Japan's policy

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
January 27, 2010

Washington, Jiji

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U.S. Assistant Secretary of State (for East Asian and Pacific Affairs) Kurt Campbell, speaking to reporters in Washington on Jan. 25, indicated that the victory of Susumu Inamine, who opposes the existing plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the Henoko district in Nago, in the mayoral election in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, will have an impact on the relocation. He said: "It is certain that a new factor has been added (to the Futenma issue)."

"I want to ask about what impact the results of this mayoral election may have on the thinking of senior Japanese officials," Campbell also said in connection with his visit to Japan scheduled for next week to attend talks on deepening the bilateral alliance, indicating his plan to ask about Japan's policy. At the same time, he expressed a negative view about holding talks with Inamine, saying, "I am going to exchange views with the central government."

6) Hirano: Government might implement Futenma relocation plan without local residents' consent

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
January 27, 2010

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, referring during a press conference yesterday to the Nago mayoral election in which a candidate opposed to accepting the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture) achieved a victory, reiterated his view that the government might determine a relocation site without the consent of local residents. He said, "Do things not move forward if we cannot obtain consent (from the relocation site)?"

"Do things not move forward if (the local government) refuses to accept the plan?" Hirano again said in an afternoon press conference. "We want to fully examine that point. There could be cases in which we can take legal steps to implement the plan." Hirano thus pointed to the possibility of a legal settlement of the matter if the local government rejects the plan.

7) First test flight of ASDF's domestically-produced next generation transport aircraft XC-2 conducted

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)
Evening, January 26, 2010

Tetsuya Hioka

The first test flight of a prototype XC-2, the next generation transport aircraft (CX) of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) that the Ministry of Defense (MOD) is developing, took place at the ASDF's Gifu Air Base in Kagamihara City on Jan. 26. The test had originally been scheduled for September 2007, but the development project was delayed considerably due to various problems, such as inadequate strength of certain components. If the safety of the XC-2 is verified, shipment of the aircraft will begin within this fiscal year.

The MOD started the development of the CX as the successor to the C-1 transport aircraft, which has reached the end of its service life, in FY01. The body of the aircraft is 43.9 meters long, 44.4 meters wide, and 14.2 meters high. Since the new transport aircraft is also expected to be used on overseas missions, such as for

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disaster relief, its flight range and load capacity have been upgraded considerably compared to the C-1.

This transport aircraft was manufactured by Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. and a number of related companies. The total development cost, including spending on the XP-1, the successor to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's P-3C patrol plane, is approximately 340 billion yen.

8) MSDF has engaged in more than 100 antipiracy interdictions off Somalia

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 27, 2010

As of Jan. 26 the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) has carried out more than 100 interdictions off Somalia since it began the antipiracy mission there last March. The MSDF has so far provided escort services to 562 commercial ships of Japan, China, and other countries. The government ended the MSDF's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. However, it intends to continue the MSDF's antipiracy mission off Somalia as a pillar of its international contribution, along with aid to quake-hit Haiti, to which the government has decided to dispatch a Ground Self-Defense Force unit to join the UN peacekeeping operations (PKO).

9) Foreign Minister Okada negative about Japan-Russia joint economic activities

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 27, 2010

At a press conference yesterday, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada took a negative view on joint economic activities between Japan and Russia, saying, "Unless the fundamental issue is resolved, there will be difficult legal problems. I don't take a positive view of this approach." Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov yesterday told the Nihon Keizai Shimbun that he "supports" joint Japan-Russia economic activities. However, Okada underscored Japan's position that the settlement of the issue of ownership of four Russia-held islands is a prior condition for joint economic activities of the two countries.

10) Sengoku to attend Davos conference

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 27, 2010

Yoshito Sengoku, state minister for national strategy and administrative reform, revealed yesterday after a cabinet meeting that he intends to attend the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (Davos conference). If the Diet approves of his participation in the Davos conference, he will leave for Geneva aboard a government plane along with Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Hirotaka Akamatsu and Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Masayuki Naoshima. Akamatsu and Naoshima are expected to attend informal ministerial talks of the World Trade Organization.

11) Japan-China-ROK joint industry-government-academic research group on trilateral FTA to hold first meeting in May

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)

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January 27, 2010

Masanori Yamaguchi in Seoul

Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) held a preparatory meeting of bureau chief level officials of their ministries of foreign affairs in Seoul on Jan. 26 and agreed to hold the first meeting of a joint industry-government-academic research project on a trilateral free trade agreement (FTA) in Seoul as soon as May. According to an official involved with the meeting, officials of the three countries agreed at the preparatory meeting that "the joint research project will be significant for strengthening economic ties among the three countries." The research group is expected to meet at least once every six months.

12) Diet debate in Upper House Budget Committee meeting on Jan. 26

YOMIURI (Page 15) (Excerpts)
January 27, 2010

Japan-U.S. alliance

Yoichi Masuzoe of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP): Do you think that military relations between Japan and the U.S. are on an equal footing?

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama: As seen from the fact that Japan dispatched Ground Self-Defense Force troops to Iraq and Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels to the Indian Ocean at the request of the U.S., Japan's security policy was overly dependent on the U.S. In an equal relationship, Japan should make proposals and conduct thorough talks with the U.S. on military affairs.

Yoshimasa Hayashi of the LDP: The prime minister said "trust me" during the latest Japan-U.S. summit meeting. Does it mean that the government will thoroughly discuss the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station?

Hatoyama: I wanted to convey that it was important for the two countries to deepen the bilateral relationship of trust and for the other side to trust me. This is exactly what I meant. I expressed my desire that the president will trust me overall. I did not mean to promise this or that, setting time limits.

13) Remark by Hatoyama on Futenma issue in Upper House Budget Committee meeting

SANKEI (Page 5) (Excerpt)
January 27, 2010

We must prepare a reply that can convince both the U.S. and the people in Okinawa. The study committee on Okinawa base issues is making utmost efforts. We will push ahead with discussion from scratch, and I will come up with a conclusion by the end of May without fail.

14) Government to coordinate with PNP on foreigner suffrage bill

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
January 27, 2010

The government intends to submit to the current Diet session a bill

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to give permanent foreign residents in Japan the right to vote in local elections. In this connection, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano indicated in a press conference yesterday that the government should carry out coordination with the People's New Party (PNP) first. Hirano said: "State Minister for Financial Affairs and Postal Reform Shizuka Kamei has made replies (opposing the bill) in the Diet, so it is necessary that an agreement will be reached in the cabinet before the government proceeds with the issue."

15) Foreign Ministry panel to delay submission of report on secret nuclear pacts to February or after

An expert panel of the Foreign Ministry tasked with examining documents related to alleged secret accords between Japan and the U.S. plans to compile a report on its findings. Tokyo University Professor Shinichi Kitaoka, who chairs the panel, met Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada at the Foreign Ministry yesterday and said: "In order for the panel to present a responsible report, another one month or so (from January) will be needed because there are a massive amount of related documents to examine." Okada accepted his request and decided to put off the compilation of a report to sometime after February.

16) Japan notifies UN of its formal decision on greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 25 PERCENT

The government made a formal decision on Jan. 26 on Japan's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2020 as its reduction target to be submitted to the United Nations under the Copenhagen Accord that was agreed upon at the 15th Conference of Parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) in late 2009 and notified the Convention's secretariat of this decision.

A ministerial committee consisting of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, Deputy Prime Minister Naoto Kan, and other cabinet members approved this target. The committee set as the condition for meeting this target "the building of a fair and effective international framework by all major countries" - not just numerical targets - and "an agreement on an ambitious goal."

ROOS